

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 15, 17 through 22, and 24 through 28 are pending, with Claims 15 and 22 being independent. Claims 16 and 23 have been cancelled without prejudice and incorporated into Claims 15 and 22, respectively.

Claims 15, 17 through 22, and 24 through 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over European Patent document number 0 989 596 A1 (Shiraishi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,544,805 B2 (Holcman, et al.). Claims 16 and 23 were objected to and indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. All rejections and objections are respectfully traversed and are submitted to have been obviated by the cancellation without prejudice of Claims 16 and 23 and incorporation of the same into Claims 15 and 22, respectively.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, and is believed to clearly place this application in condition for allowance. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that a full appreciation of these amendments will not require undue time or effort given the Examiner's familiarity with this application. Moreover, this Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicant earnestly

believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, entry of this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010 All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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